

Betsy 1

MARY HARTMAN
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EPISODE #187

by

Jerry Adelman

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY	LOUISE LASSER
TOM	GREG MULLAVEY
CATHY	DEBRALEE SCOTT
PAT GIMBLE	SUSAN BROWNING
GARTH GIMBLE	MARTIN MULL
WANDA RITTENHOUSE	MARIAN MERCER
MERLE JEETER	DABNEY COLEMAN

SETS

ACT I
(page 1)

MARY'S KITCHEN, NEXT AFTERNOON
(Mary and Cathy)

ACT II
(page 8)

GIMBLE LIVING ROOM, THAT EVENING
(Pat, Merle, Wanda, Garth, Tom, Mary)

ACT III
(page 22)

GIMBLE LIVING ROOM, A FEW MINUTES LATER
(Garth and Pat)

ACT ONEMARY'S KITCHEN, NEXT AFTERNOON

MARY IS AT TABLE, WRITING INTENTLY.
MOMENT. CATHY ENTERS.

CATHY

Hi, Mary. Are you busy?

MARY

Yes. I know it would be polite to say no, but I'm writing about honesty which is very important, so I'm being honest because I think a writer should believe in what she's writing.

CATHY

What're you writing?

MARY

Merle asked me to write a victory speech for him. Which may be a little premature...

CATHY

A little? The polls haven't even closed yet. How do you know he's going to win?

MARY

Cathy, every candidate has to have a speech ready in case he wins.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Of course, it can't sound like a speech or the people'll think they've been taken for granted... which is why Merle probably asked me to write it, because I never sound too ready or sure of things.

CATHY

Why can't Merle write his own speech?

MARY

Cathy, all politicians have to have speech writers. So, if they say the wrong thing, it won't be too bad, because everyone will know they didn't write it in the first place.

CATHY

Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address without a speech writer.

MARY

But that was before television or radio or instant analysis by Dan Rather and Roger Mudd. I mean, what if the Gettysburg Address hadn't worked. They would have ripped him to pieces and he wouldn't have been able to blame Ron Nessen or anybody.

CATHY

How much do you make?

MARY

Very little. In fact, nothing. I'm a volunteer.

CATHY

How come?

MARY

Because, as the Readers Digest says,
good government is everybody's
responsibility.

CATHY

The Weekly Reader in fifth grade said
that, too. But what makes you think
Merle Jeeter means good government?
He's after everything in skirts.

MARY

That is prejudice, Cathy. Pure prejudice.

CATHY

(WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?) What?

MARY

In fact, it's un-American. As all the
revelations about John F. Kennedy's
extra-curricular activities definitely
prove. Besides, Merle is not a sex maniac.
Just because he tried to rape Loretta and
sleeps with Tippytoes while he's engaged
to Wanda doesn't mean he's a sex maniac.
He can't help it if he has sex appeal.

CATHY

(NOT INTERESTED IN PURSUING THE SUBJECT)

Okay. What kind of a speech are you
writing for this great American?

MARY

That's funny... I never realized before that I'm writing a speech for a great American. I'll read it to you. I'd like to get the reaction of an average citizen. I don't think you're an average citizen, but I'll allow for that when you react. That's known as scientific sampling of the electorate. Politics has become very scientific.

CATHY

Just read me the speech.

MARY

(READS) "I humbly thank the people of Fernwood for electing me. I will try to be a good and honest mayor. But as I'm only human, I am subject to temptation."

CATHY

That's for sure.

MARY

(IGNORING THAT AND CONTINUING TO READ)
"So watch me carefully. Keep me on the straight and narrow path between right and wrong... I may be my own man, but I'm your mayor." (TO CATHY) Well, what do you think of it?

CATHY

Not much.

MARY

That's very good. That's a very good reaction.

CATHY

How do you figure that?

MARY

Well, since you're not male, not employed in a unionized industry, not the head of a family, not of an ethnic minority, and you're not even registered to vote, scientifically that was a very favorable reaction.

CATHY

Okay... can I get your reaction about something?

MARY

What?

CATHY

Brian and me... we're in love.

MARY

You're pregnant.

CATHY

That's one of the reasons... yes.

MARY

One of the reasons what? I mean, why?

CATHY

What do you mean "Why"? We're in love. There's no reason for something like that.

MARY

Exactly my point.

CATHY

What point?

MARY

It's unreasonable. It's very unreasonable for a pregnant girl to fall in love with a married man who is not her husband. Also, vice versa. It's very unreasonable.

CATHY

It's also very unimportant that it's unreasonable.

MARY

Why?

CATHY

Because it's happened, that's why.

MARY

So let it un-happen. Don't go back to that house. Cathy, take my advice. Do not get involved with a married man. Especially one with a rich wife. It is so stupid.

CATHY

Thanks a lot.

MARY

Well, it is. Look what happened to Elizabeth Ray. She even flopped in "Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?"

CATHY

You're a fine one to talk. You're involved with Merle Jeeter, and he hasn't even had his honeymoon yet.

MARY

That's different.

CATHY

Why's it different?

MARY

Because I'm involved with him as a person. As a human being. Not as a man. There are two kinds of involvement, Cathy. Man-woman and person-to-person. A man-woman relationship can lead to all kinds of terrible complications. Crimes of passion, guilt feelings, motels. But a person-to-person relationship...

CATHY

Is a man-woman relationship after Women's Lib changed the words?

MARY

(THINKING ABOUT IT) Oh. Well, besides, I have a solid, functioning marriage. At least, this week I do.

FADE OUT.

ACT TWOGIMBLE LIVING ROOM, THAT EVENING

A PARTY. GAY DECORATIONS, INCLUDING JEETER POSTERS AND VICTORY SIGNS. PAT, CONSCIENTIOUS HOSTESS, PASSING DRINKS, HORS D'OEUVRES, ETC. MERLE, ARM AROUND WANDA, IS CENTER OF ATTRACTION, CONGRATULATIONS, ETC. GARTH SUCKING UP TO MERLE. TOM AND MARY ARE THERE.

TOM

But you know what I think really clinched the election for you, Merle? That two minutes of silence in your TV speech the other night. That really got to the voters.

MERLE

Yes, I feel it did, too. It was something I knew in my heart was right.

TOM

It really sold you, man.

WANDA

(GLOWING) In your heart, you know he's sold.

MERLE

You see, what I've tried to sell all through this campaign was not myself, but what is right and honest and decent and clean.

WANDA

Also reverent, obedient, and kind.

TOM

Well, whatever it was, the voters sure bought it.

MERLE

Yes, I guess they did. Of course, Wanda didn't want me to do that two minutes of silence, you know.

WANDA

(SMILES) I admit it. I thought it was too gimmicky. But I was wrong. Of course, that is the first political boo-boo I've ever made, you understand.

GARTH

Don't forget me. I must have been doing something right, publicity-wise.

MERLE

You agreed with Wanda, Garth... you told me those two minutes of silence would cost me more votes than any politician could lose actually statin' his position about somethin'.

GARTH

(HE'S STUNG) Look, I just meant...

BUT MERLE TURNS TO MARY.

MERLE

By the way, Mary, I haven't had a chance to thank you properly for that acceptance speech you wrote for me.

MARY

You liked it?

MERLE

Oh, it was just great. And that line about keeping me on the straight and narrow path between right and wrong was so on-the-mark. I'm going to make that the watchword of my administration.

GARTH

Well, I don't know, Merle. Actually, I'm not sure you ought to use that line again. Don't want to give the people any ideas, or you might wind up accountable.

MERLE

I'm going to use it, Garth. And I'm gonna use it often. You see, Mary has this knack for comin' up with just the right line...

MARY

Oh, I just think up what comes into my head. Actually, I don't know anything about politics.

MERLE

You know how to communicate with the people. And that's what politics is all about. I want you to keep on writing for me.

GARTH

Merle, you've got to be careful about these things. Public relations is no game for amateurs...

MERLE

Yeh? Well, some of the amateurs on my team seem to have contributed a lot more than some of the professionals. (GARTH THINKS THE SHOE FITS, AND IT HURTS. MERLE TURNS AGAIN TO MARY, AND, WITHOUT MISSING A BEAT) Stay with me, Mary. I need you.

PAT APPROACHES WITH A TRAY OF COCKTAILS.

PAT

Cocktails, anyone? Merle?

MERLE

No, thank you, sweetheart. I find the friendship and warmth of my supporters intoxication enough. But I thank you. And I want to thank you for the party.

PAT

Oh, well, I know how close you and Garth are. You see, Garth wanted to express his...

GARTH

(INTERRUPTS) All right, Pat. I'll express it myself. Just pass the drinks.

PAT

Tom?

TOM

No, thanks, Pat. I'm on the wagon.

PAT

Mary?

MARY

Just an un-cola, if you have it.

PAT

Of course. I'll get it. (STARTS TO
MOVE TO THE BAR.)

GARTH TAKES NOT UNPAINFUL HOLD OF
HER ARM.

GARTH

Aren't you forgetting something, kiddo?
I'm not on the wagon.

PAT

Oh, darling, I'm sorry. (HANDS GARTH
A COCKTAIL)

GARTH

(TAKES A SIP OF COCKTAIL, SEEMS NOT
TO LIKE IT) What you ought to be sorry
about is these cocktails. This isn't
the way I taught you how to mix a martini.

WANDA

Mine's perfect.

MARY

Excuse me. I've decided against an
un-cola.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

But, whatever I decide, let's toast the happy couple.

EVERYBODY TOASTS "HERE, HERE".
MARY AT THE BAR. WANDA ALONG-SIDE.

MARY (CONT'D)

Actually, Wanda. I know this must be the happiest night of your life. Being engaged to the new mayor. And also being in love with him, too.

WANDA

I'd be even happier if I could be just halfway sure of him.

MARY

Oh, Wanda, he loves you. Anybody can tell he loves you to distraction.

WANDA

But that's just it... he can be distracted and Merle has his own very peculiar ideas about love.

MARY

What ideas? Look, Wanda... love is love.

WANDA

Yeah? Mary, let me ask you a question.

MARY

About love? I'm not an expert, although I did read parts of "Fear of Flying".

WANDA

About Merle. Has he made a play for you recently?

MARY

Recently? A play? For me? What kind of a play? You mean like a forward pass?

WANDA

Well, Merle is forward. I wouldn't be surprised if he were a secret fanny-pincher.

MARY

Oh, you mean, that kind of a play.

WANDA

Yes, Mary. That kind. And I would appreciate the truth.

MARY

The truth, absolutely.

WANDA

Well?

MARY

Well what?

WANDA

Has he?

MARY

Look, Wanda, let me answer your question this way...

WANDA

You could just answer it yes or no.

MARY

But I'd rather answer it politically.
I mean, diplomatically. You're my
friend, I'm your friend. And, after
all, what are friends for?

WANDA

To tell the truth.

MARY

Yes.

WANDA

Yes, what?

MARY

You see, it's such a trivial question,
you don't even remember what it is.

ANGLE ON MERLE, TOM AND GARTH.

MERLE

(TO TOM) I understand things are going
pretty good for you.

TOM

Can't complain.

MERLE

Well, if you do complain... I mean,
about the business situation in
Fernwood... I want you to come to me
with those complaints. Because I'm going
to have an open administration. My office
is going to be open at all times to all
the citizens of Fernwood.

GARTH

Merle, I think we ought to do a little thinking about that. You could start getting visits from all sorts a crackpots. There could be bad publicity.

MERLE

As mayor, I want to hear from all the people, and I don't believe in prejudice against crackpots. Let him who is without sin...

WANDA APPROACHES, HAPPILY EXCITED,
TRAILED BY MARY.

WANDA

Merle, guess what. Mary has offered us her living room!

MERLE

What for?

WANDA

Well, for the wedding, of course.

MERLE

Oh. For a minute there, I thought...

GARTH

Nope, forget it. We've got plans for a much bigger splash than that. We'll use city hall. And a big reception in the city council chambers.

MERLE

But I want a quiet wedding, Garth.

(MORE)

MERLE (CONT'D)

Just me and my beloved and some close friends in the sight of the Lord. And at no expense to the taxpayers. Thank you, Mary. We'd be proud to have the ceremony at your home.

GARTH

But I promised Liz Reed of Fernwood Today Magazine...

TOM

She can come to our place... we don't mind.

MERLE

Thank you, Tom.

GARTH

But our place is better than your place. And we only took that till we could get a buy in Fernwood Heights. (THEN MORE PRIVATELY TO MERLE) No one has any fun at Mary's house, Merle... you were at her last party.

MERLE

Now just a second there, Garth. That's a pretty uncalled for thing to say.

MARY

And tacky... very tacky.

GARTH

Look, all I meant was...

MERLE

(INTERRUPTS) In fact, I think you owe Mary and Tom here an apology.

GARTH

I apologize.

MERLE

Words are cheap, Garth. The truth is, I don't like your attitude toward people. I don't think you have proper political instincts.

TOM

Or real estate instincts. There was one dog of a house on our block, and you bought it!

MERLE

So, to put it as plain as I can put it, Garth, I have no further use of your services.

BRIEF SHOCKED PAUSE.

PAT

Garth...

GARTH

Shut up.

TOM

Don't tell her to shut up.

MARY

Listen, everybody. I have a good idea.
A very good idea.

WANDA

Oh, isn't that nice? Mary has an idea.

MARY

Let's everybody go home. Because I really think it's getting late, and when it gets late at a party, everybody starts setting fire to their pants or calling somebody's wife a bag...

MERLE

Well, I agree with that. Wanda, you ready?

WANDA

Of course, darling. Lovely party, Pat.

WANDA AND MERLE EXIT.

PAT

Goodnight, everybody.

MARY

Goodnight, Garth. Goodnight, Pat.
A wonderful party! Thank you so much.
Tom, come on...

TOM

(STILL P'D OFF AT GARTH) Yeah, it is getting a little stale in here.

MARY

(SINGING OUT) Goodnight, everybody!

MARY TAKES TOM'S ARM AND THEY EXIT.

GARTH

(TO PAT) That was great. That was just great, kiddo. You really know how to throw a party.

MARY ENTERS.

MARY

I forgot my purse.

PAT

It must be around someplace.

MARY AND PAT START TO LOOK FOR THE PURSE, AS:

MARY

Isn't that silly of me? To forget a purse. I mean, how can a person forget her purse when she leaves a place. They say it's because you secretly wanted to come back... (TO PAT) Are you all right?

PAT

Of course, Mary.

MARY

I didn't actually want to come back... I just thought if you needed some moral support...

PAT

Oh, no...

GARTH

Maybe your purse is in the bedroom.

MARY

Actually, I didn't bring it. I just wanted to thank you again for a lovely evening. And if for any reason, you two should need anything... a glass of milk, a referee... just scream. I mean, holler. (A SMILE AND SHE GOES)

FAST FADE OUT.

ACT THREEGIMBLE LIVING ROOM, A FEW MINUTES LATER

GARTH AND PAT. PAT IS CLEANING UP THE DEBRIS FROM THE PARTY. GARTH HAS CLOSED HIMSELF IN A DARK CLOUD OF SILENT ANGER. LONG MOMENT.

GARTH

Okay, you want to explain it to me?

PAT

Explain what?

GARTH

Mary's crack about a referee.

PAT

It wasn't a crack. She was just being funny.

GARTH

Okay, we'll let that pass. Now all you have to explain is the rest of the evening.

PAT

The rest of the evening? I don't understand.

GARTH

(NASTY MOCKING) "I don't understand?"

(MORE).

GARTH (CONT'D)

Are you kidding? On account of you,
all the work I've done for Merle Jetter
is down the drain and I'm out in the
cold and all you have to say is "I
don't understand"?

PAT

Oh, I'm sorry you antagonized Merle,
darling, but...

GARTH

(INTERRUPTS) I antagonized Merle?? I
antagonized Merle???

PAT

Well, I mean...

GARTH

Are you really so stupid you can't see
this whole mess is your fault???

PAT

Garth, I tried to make everything nice.

GARTH

You tried to make everything nice. I
see. Is that why you made those rotten
cocktails and those soggy hors d'oeuvres?
Is that why you drivelled all that stupid
conversation? Is that why you invited
that idiot Mary Hartman so she could
take my job away from me? Is that your
idea of making everything nice?

PAT

Garth, all I...

GARTH

Oh, shut up.

PAT

But, Garth, I...

GARTH

(APPROACHING HER WITH HIS RIGHT HAND
HELD BACK IN POSITION TO BACKHAND SLAP
IN HER FACE) I said shut up.

PAT

(TERRIFIED) Garth, you said you weren't
going to hit me any more. You promised.

GARTH

Hit you? Who's hitting you, kiddo? Did
I hit you? Huh? Did I? Did I hit you?
Answer me.

PAT

No, Garth, you didn't.

GARTH

That's better. Of course, I wouldn't
hit you. You're my darling, faithful,
supportive little wife, aren't you? The
big helpmate in my career. Why would I
hit you? (HE "PLAYFULLY" PINCHES HER
LEFT DELTOID MUSCLE -- AND KEEPS PINCHING
IT)

PAT

(IN PAIN) Oww!

GARTH

(STILL HOLDING THE DELTOID) What's the matter, kiddo? This doesn't hurt, does it? This is just a little love pat, Pat.

PAT

(IN PAIN) Garth, you're hurting me.

GARTH

(STILL PINCHING) This hurts? How can this hurt? You must have a little touch of rheumatism. I'll try the other side, okay? (HE PINCHES HER OTHER DELTOID HARD AND CONTINUES TO HOLD IT HARD)

PAT

(IN PAIN) Garth!

GARTH

(STILL PINCHING) What's the matter, kiddo? Don't you like your dearly beloved husband to touch you?

PAT

(IN PAIN) Garth, please! You promised.

GARTH

(ROUGHLY RELEASING HER) Oh, stop whining. And don't just stand there. Clean up this mess. Do something right for a change. Go ahead. Clean up.

PAT RESUMES HER CLEANING UP, BUT
TERRORIZED BY GARTH, CANNOT HELP
GLANCING AT HIM FROM TIME TO
TIME, OBVIOUSLY FEARING THAT HE
MAY DO SOMETHING TO HURT HER.

GARTH (CONT'D)

Don't look at me! Pay attention to what
you're doing! Clean up!

PAT CONTINUES TO CLEAN UP, FORCING
HERSELF NOT TO LOOK AT HIM. HE
WATCHES HER. LONG MOMENT. APPAR-
ENTLY REALIZING SHE IS NOT GOING
TO LOOK AT HIM, HE QUIETLY BUT
DELIBERATELY PUSHES AN ASHTRAY
OFF A TABLE. IT HITS THE FLOOR
NOISILY AND PAT NATURALLY REACTS
BY TURNING TO LOOK.

GARTH (CONT'D)

I told you not to look at me!!!

HE PICKS UP A HALF EMPTY GLASS OF
RED WINE AND THROWS IT AT HER.
IT MISSES HER AND CRASHES AGAINST
THE WALL, LEAVING A STAIN. PAT
IS TERRORIZED.

GARTH (CONT'D)

You're enough to drive anybody crazy!!

Now look what you've made me do!! Well???

Are you just going to stand there??

(POINTING AT MESS ON THE WALL) Clean
that off!!!

PAT, TERRORIZED, PICKS UP A NAPKIN
AND STARTS RUBBING AT THE WINE ON
THE WALL.

GARTH (CONT'D)

You're just making it worse!!!

HE THROWS ANOTHER GLASS OF WINE AT
HER. IT MISSES HER AND SPLATTERS
AGAINST THE WALL. PAT'S TERROR
INCREASES.